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LITTLE MISS DINAH OF AFRICA

BY ELI HARVEY

SINCE the year 1847 when the first authentic news came from Africa of the existence of the gorilla there have been many sporadic attempts to bring this most mysterious and interesting member of the family of anthropoid apes to the confines of the white man's civilization and maintain him in captivity. The last notable effort was made by the New York Zoological Society in the year 1912 when Mr. Garner was sent on an expedition to the French Congo to procure gorillas for the society; with instructions to remain in that country for two years after specimens were captured in order to accustom them to their white captor as companion, and teach them to eat more civilized food than the acrid food of their native jungles.

Of the society's first attempt to procure a gorilla through the assistance of Mr. Garner the result was to bring to us one young male gorilla in a deplorable condition. After Herculean efforts to satisfy his fastidious appetite, he died within four days after arrival at the New York Zoo. It required some time to recover from this disappointment, but the Zoo felt that sufficient experience had been gained to justify organizing another expedition to the Congo. The second ven-

ture was in a sense successful, for the young female gorilla Dinah was delivered at the Park in perfect physical condition; there she lived for eleven months, and then died of "malnutrition."

The male appeared to be less tractable and more morose than the female; but Dinah was unusually docile and made many friends. This amiable if not cheerful disposition doubtless helped to penetrate the gloom of despondency that seems to envelop all gorillas in a shroud as black as their skins, at least from the time of capture; by staying the depression of "home-sickness" for her native haunts, it was conducive to greater longevity.

There can be little doubt that Dinah's loss of appetite and general decline were due to a mental condition as much as to any other cause. The writer had the good fortune to see much of Dinah up to a period within four days of her death; and modeled detailed studies from her that served in the execution of her life-size portrait in bronze commissioned by the Zoo, from which the accompanying cut was taken.

Dinah always inspired me with a feeling of sympathy, as her large deep-brown eyes gazed dreamily into mine, her head lowered until the chin rested upon the chest, as it is wont to do owing to the short thick neck and long spinal processes in that region; this depression of the head, with reluctant glances from beneath the very protruding orbital ridges gave Dinah an air of diffidence. The slow and limited rotary movement of the head from side to side necessitates a supplemental turning of the eyes to focus upon a desired object. All movements of body or limb, if compared with the chimpanzee, are slow; and except under great stress or excitement of emotion, silence reigns: no chattering, not even a grunt to break the mystery!

With this bond of sympathy between the gorilla as model, and the sculptor, imagination easily became reality, and hence the following soliloquy:

"Alone! Alone! I know not where—things are so strange, passing strange—so cold, the sun's rays come aslant and cheerless. The inhabitants have bleached into spectres; they give me food so tasteless, they tell me I am in exile the only one of my race snatched from the bosom of my family and brought across wide oceans to live and die in captivity. For what? A holiday? No, not that! Then why was I so ruthlessly snatched from my happy abode in the trees while my parents were away



LITTLE MISS DINAH
MODELED BY ELI HARVEY

seeking dainty morsels of food for me? I was happy in a mother's love, whose warmth equalled the equatorial sun bathed in the humid atmosphere of the deep, dark and hospitable jungles,—and yet they seized upon me! Why?"

But the real pathos of it all is that these man-like apes do not even know they are martyrs to the cause of science. Dinah, however, was of such amiable and obliging disposition, I am constrained to believe she would have been a willing martyr to the cause, had one been able to explain it to her.

The gorilla is an anthropoid ape and one of the most interesting members of the family Simiidae. The family of anthropoid or man-like apes comprise the gibbons, the oranges, the chimpanzees, and the greatest of them the gorilla. Like other members of the family he is principally arboreal, and is confined to the Old World; can stand fairly erect, but prefers to walk on all fours, supporting the forward portion of the body by resting the back of the second joint of his fingers on the ground. While in general outward appearance there is a vast difference between the gorilla and man, yet, owing to the fact that he is the largest of the anthropoids, and that almost every detail of the cranial and physical structure finds a counterpart in that of man, and that the lower part of the face is placed more nearly under the brain casement as in man, scientists have generally placed him in the order next to man.

Since the time of Darwin the family of anthropoids have enjoyed unusual distinction and excited the curiosity of the lay mind, while scientists and theologians have raged furiously over the startling theory of the "Evolution of Man," one group having combated the other over such bone relics as might constitute the wanted "missing the link." The skull fragment and shinbone of the Java ape-man, *Pithecanthropus Erectus* and the skull of the Piltdown man of England have become "bones of contention," for which no *modus vivendi* has been found. In the meanwhile the anthropoids are happy in their arboreal existence, except when one of their number is kidnapped for the pale-faced bipeds, to prove their cultural superiority in having become terrestrial and having created for themselves a more complex existence. For motives sufficient Homo Sapiens is as intent on establishing kinship with the timorous ape as are "forty-second cousins" to gain an earthly inheritance.

Hanno the Carthaginian, we are told, on his voyage about 550 B. C. to Fernando Po discovered the gorilla, or was the first to record a description of the mysterious and elusive creature; but it was not until the year 1847 that any precise evidence of the existence of the gorilla reached Europe. Dr. Savage an English missionary stationed at the Gabun in Africa wrote to Sir Richard Owen the veteran comparative anatomist a description of an ape of that district unusual in size and appearance; he enclosed drawings of a skull of this large species. After examining other skulls sent to him Dr. Owen named the ape *Troglodytes Savagei*. About the same time, it appears, Dr. Savage also sent a skull of the unknown ape with a description of the animal itself by the hand of a fellow-missionary named Wilson to Boston, U. S. A., and in the year 1847 an American journal of science described the new ape and named it *Troglodytes Gorilla*. In the year 1851 the first complete skeleton of a gorilla was brought to England and presented to the Royal College of

Surgeons and during the same year another skeleton was sent to Philadelphia by Mr. Ford.

Paul du Chaillu, the well-known African hunter and traveler, arrived at the Gabun in the year 1856. Two years after his expedition into the interior the British Museum received an entire gorilla preserved in spirits; the skin of which was mounted and exhibited to the public. In 1861 Paul du Chaillu published his "Explorations and Adventure in Equatorial Africa" in which his narrative of personal encounters with gorillas in the dense jungles startled the world. This intrepid hunter was possessed of such power of imagination that much discernment is required to weed out the fictitious and to hold to that which rings true. However, the most that is known at present of the gorilla's general aspect alive and in his native haunts we owe to the zeal and prowess of Paul du Chaillu.

Some of the points of greatest divergence between the gorilla and man, which have caused certain scientists to place man in a zoölogical order by himself, are as follows:—the weight of the gorilla's brain rarely exceeds 20 oz., while that of man is 32 oz. as the minimum, although the male gorilla's body greatly exceeds that of man. The structure of the gorilla is such as to suit arboreal habits rather than terrestrial; his foot is hand-like, prehensile in suppleness, with large opposable thumb-like big toe, suited to grasp the branches of trees; the arms of great length, about 1/6 longer than his spine, whereas a man's arm is 1/5 shorter than his spine. The hands of the gorilla are much heavier and clumsier and the thumb is proportionately much shorter than in man. The brow ridges project but slightly in man, while these ridges are exceedingly prominent in the gorilla. The arrested growth of the brain of the gorilla at an early age, and the continued growth of the brow ridges and lower portions of the face cause the backward slant of the forehead, whereas the opposite is a characteristic in man. Whatever may be said to the contrary, scientists are fairly in accord that man and the ape family have a common ancestry and sprang from different branches of the same ancestral tree.

So far as is known the life-size portrait shown in the accompanying cut represents the first model ever made from a living gorilla at any time in any country. The eminent French animal sculptor Emanuel Frémiet executed a very notable figure of an adult male gorilla, the bronze of which may be seen in the American Museum of Natural History. Although the sculptor did not have the living creature to work from, with his great anatomical knowledge he made the most of such data as were at his command and the result is truly startling. The group, unfortunately, is marred by the gorilla being represented as carrying away a native of the Congo. It may have been due to a fancy of the sculptor or his being overcredulous of stories from hunters or the natives themselves—whatever the cause, the action is untrue to nature and also gives a very horrible, painful impression.

Past experiences would indicate the folly of trying to transplant a gorilla to a temperate zone with any hope of success; but that the young may be reared in captivity until full grown, if kept within the tropics, is eminently practicable. More could be learned of the gorilla by this means of study and by modeling from life than by slaying them in the jungles and mounting their skins for some museum.

Eli Harvey